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SENATE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, The political presence of African Americans in
3 Illinois was first manifested in 1876; John W. E. Thomas of
4 Chicago was elected to the House of Representatives as the
5 first African American to serve in the Illinois General
6 Assembly in that year; then in 1924, Adelbert H. Roberts became
7 the first African American elected to the Illinois Senate; in
8 1958, Floy Clements became the first African-American woman
9 elected to the State legislature; these three are considered
10 political pioneers who paved the way for other African
11 Americans in the Illinois General Assembly; and

12 WHEREAS, Fred J. Smith and Corneal A. Davis each spent 36
13 years in the General Assembly; as the Dean of the Senate, Dean
14 Smith was the longest serving member of the chamber with 24
15 years; Mr. Davis' entire career was in the House; Harold
16 Washington left the Senate in 1981 to serve as a member of the
17 United State Congress; soon afterward, he was elected to serve
18 as the first African-American Mayor of the City of Chicago; and

19 WHEREAS, Carolyn Moseley Braun left the House of
20 Representatives in 1988 to become the Cook County Recorder of
21 Deeds; later, she was the first African-American woman elected
22 to the United States Senate; in addition, Earlean Collins was
23 the first African-American woman elected to the State Senate
24 and the first to serve in leadership; and

25 WHEREAS, The late Cecil Partee was the first African
26 American elected to serve as Senate President, and prior to
27 that, he was Senate Minority Leader; after leaving the
28 legislature, he served as treasurer for the City of Chicago and
29 as the Cook County State's Attorney; the Honorable Emil Jones,
30 is the second African American to serve as both Senate
31 President and Senate Minority Leader; and

1 WHEREAS, Margaret Smith and Earlean Collins were the first
2 African- American women to join their spouses in service to the
3 State of Illinois; Jesse White, a former member of the Illinois
4 House, became Cook County Recorder of Deeds in 1993, and he has
5 subsequently been elected to two terms as the first
6 African-American Secretary of State in Illinois; and

7 WHEREAS, In the current 93rd General Assembly, there are
8 nine African-American State Senators and 19 African-American
9 Representatives; in 1966, the late Senator Kenneth Hall of East
10 St. Louis was the first African American to be elected to serve
11 from outside of the city of Chicago; he was elected to the
12 Senate in 1970; Wyvetter H. Younge, also of East St. Louis, is
13 the senior member in the House of Representatives having served
14 continuously since her first election in 1974; and

15 WHEREAS, Appreciation of diversity and unity of purpose
16 directed toward a common agenda was realized in 1966, when
17 Representatives Harold Washington, Louis A. H. Caldwell, Otis
18 Collins, and Calvin L. Smith formed a study group to examine
19 issues affecting African Americans in Illinois and to explore
20 ways to address those issues; they realized early on that by
21 capitalizing on the strengths of individual study groups
22 members much could be accomplished; in that year, the study
23 group grew to include Senators Richard H. Newhouse, Senator
24 Charles Chew, Jr., Representative Raymond W. Ewell, and
25 Representative Kenneth Hall; the group became a more formalized
26 political entity in 1968, as the Illinois Legislative Black
27 Caucus; and

28 WHEREAS, The Illinois Legislative Black Caucus continues
29 to represent the interests of Illinois citizens in numerous
30 ways; it has been particularly instrumental in assuring that
31 the interests of African-American citizens are given equitable
32 representation in the General Assembly and that effective
33 responses are fashioned to address those interests; and

1 WHEREAS, Today as the Illinois Legislative Black Caucus
2 observes the culmination of Black History month in the year
3 2004, its members have also established the Illinois
4 Legislative Black Caucus Foundation to expand the influence of
5 and serve the best interest of their diverse constituencies of
6 the State; therefore, be it

7 RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE OF NINETY-THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF
8 THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we recognize the efforts of
9 African-American Legislators and their continued role in the
10 history of this great State.